

January 21, 2004

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## **Applying Shariah laws through Islamic Arbitration is a barbaric act and must be opposed immediately**

Several Islamic groups are in the process of forming an "Arbitration Council in Ontario". At recent convention they elected a 30-member council which will establish a judicial tribunal to be known as "Islamic Institute of civil Justice" in according with Shariah law. Its bylaw is scheduled to be drafted and approved by 31 December 2003.

In the article "Analysis of Shariah Law in Canada," Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham, explains that " Under the arbitration act, 1991, people may make an agreement to have any disputes adjudicated by binding arbitration. It would usually be used by business people for resolving issues related to contracts. But they can also be used to resolve dispute between neighbors ... Arbitrators are given broad powers to decide their own jurisdiction and process. Under the act, an arbitrator's award is enforceable through the court as through it was a court order."

It is said that Shariah arbitration board is being set up under the current arbitration Act, 1991.

This act is a clearly violation of human rights. This act will allow Muslims in Canada to be ruled by Muslim personal law. This includes adoption, divorce, inheritance, custody of children and so on. If this act gets approve, Muslim men will have the privileges as the so-called "head of the household" and women in these families will never achieve equal rights to run family's finance, inheritance, choice of residence, housework, professional employment, divorce, and in case of separation, custody of children. And division of, and claims to, the family's property. This act will escalates all the slavish obligations of the wife towards the husband under

the Islamic laws and ancient traditions. It will also increase emotional, verbal, sexual and physical abuse as Muslim women traditionally can not press any charges against “head of the household”. This act gives more power to Muslim men to impose housework or housekeeping duties on the women in the families. It will intimidate, restrict and depredate women and girls in the family.

It has been emphasis that people enter into arbitration voluntarily. Brendan Crawley, a spokesman for the Ontario Ministry of the attorney General Stated that people can use any arbitrator they want and can use a religious framework. He reveled that the charter of rights is the supreme law of Canada and the arbitration act is subjected to it.

My question is who will educate abused women about their rights to refuse to attend to this arbitration board? Imams from mosques or Muslim lawyers!

I strongly believe that this is a barbaric act. And must be stopped immediately before causes more damage to society as whole.

Norms and practices in society should be secular and progressive. This means the complete purging of the state and administration from religion, ethnicity, nationalism, racialism and any ideology and institution that contradicts the absolute equality of all in civil rights and before the law.

Women for past two decades have struggled for the realization and protection of their individual and civil rights. In some countries they managed to take part in elections at all levels and hold any position and office-political, administrative, judicial, and so on.

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This is a barbaric act and must be opposed immediately. It will push back women's rights movement.